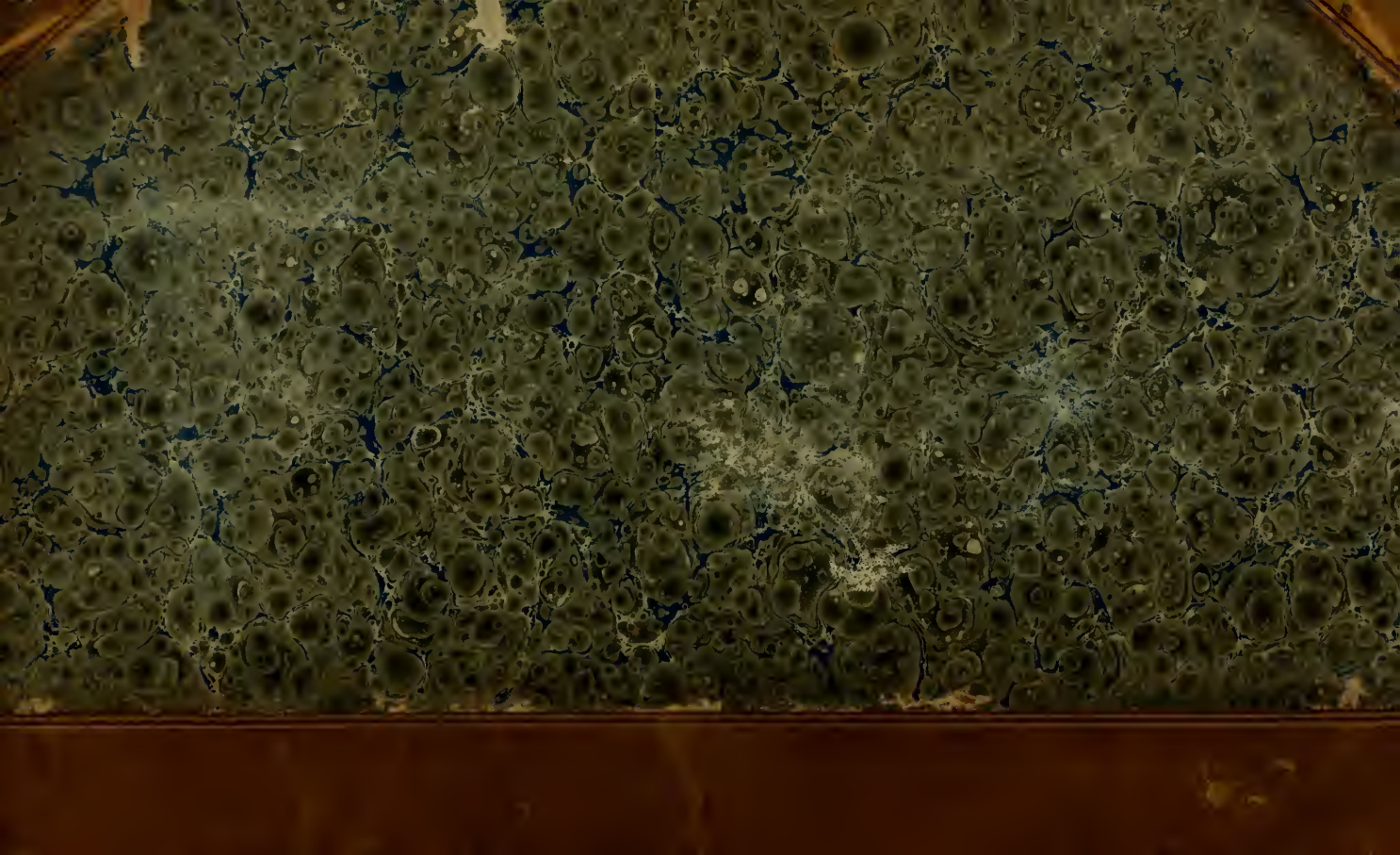

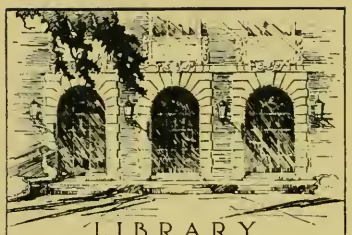

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WESTMINSTER AND DR. WISEMAN;

OR,

FACTS *v.* FICTION.

"Speaking the truth in love."—EPHES. iv. 15.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following short Statement of Facts, relating to the spiritual condition of the district in which I reside, was hastily drawn up, in answer to the unworthy sarcasms with which Dr. Wiseman, in his "Appeal," thought fit to assail a body of men, whose conduct it would be more fitting for him to emulate than to traduce. My long acquaintance with Westminster had enabled me to appreciate the active co-operation of the Dean and Chapter collectively, and of many of the Canons individually, with the Parochial Clergy, and Lay Members of the Church, in diffusing sound religious knowledge; and the assertion hazarded by Dr. Wiseman, that their wealth was "stagnant, and not diffusive," at once satisfied me of his entire ignorance of the most important portion of the district which he affects to govern as its Diocesan. Had he known what they have done, and what has been left undone by the members of his own communion, as regards their unfortunate Irish brethren, he would not have provoked a contrast so discreditable to the Romanists. Certainly, any one who has travelled to Rome, and contemplated its wretched population, must have been not a little surprised at the assertion, that "a large staff of Clergy, and ample revenues, suffice to create around them a little paradise of comfort, cheerfulness, and ease;" for such, Dr. Wiseman says, was the case in "ancient times" in England, and insinuates to have been the consequence of our then connexion with Rome. But if a stranger visit Westminster, he will not find the Irish in much better plight than the Pope's own subjects, although we are told in

the "Appeal" that Dr. Wiseman was by many addressed as "Archbishop of Westminster" more than two years ago. The exact resources of the Dean and Chapter are well known, all the Ecclesiastical bodies of our Church having made full returns to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Those of Dr. Wiseman, and his Ecclesiastical brethren, are not so well known: but in one single instance, that of Mr. Blundell, a sum exceeding the income of the whole Chapter of Westminster for many years was bequeathed to him; and many similar gifts have been made to Romish Vicars Apostolic, as to which no trusts are expressed, but which, I believe, are fairly applied by them to the purposes of their Church.

Although the subjoined Statement was written in haste, and in a condensed form, in order not to trespass at too great length on the courtesy of the Editor of the *Times*, yet it was substantially correct; where there were errors, they were understatements of the facts. Several of the most active supporters of our Parochial Charities have requested me to allow it to be reprinted, with my own name attached to it; and I do so, not with any wish to add to the excitement which the Papal aggression has naturally occasioned, but rather with a view of giving a practical direction to that zeal, with which we are contending for the pure faith of our Reformed branch of the Catholic Church. We have protested, and rightly so, against the assumed jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome; and, as St. Paul "withstood St. Peter to the face," when "he was to be blamed," so, I trust, will our Church ever continue to bear witness against that of Rome, when she would "build again the things we have destroyed"—the corruptible things—"wood, hay, stubble," with which she has overlaid the foundation. But the *sincerity* of our faith will be tested by works, not by words; and the attack from without should be the signal for union and exertion within.

My Letter to the *Times* showed what had been done; now let me shortly suggest what remains to be done.

We have upwards of 60,000 inhabitants in our two parishes. There ought to be at least 10,000 children receiving education. Taking rich and poor together, there is probably not one-half of that number at school. The other 5,000 children will be found wholly among the poor, and most of them running wild in our streets.

Our churches, when all the nine are completed, would not hold more than from 10,000 to 12,000 people. After allowing for the Dissenting chapels, there would not be room for one-half of those who out of our population ought to attend public worship, even if they were willing to do so.

But without additional Clergy you will not even fill the churches which you may build,—for it is the weekly visiting that really "edifies" the Church as a spiritual building. A popular preacher may fill the seats of the material edifice; but the pastor, who "binds up the broken-hearted," and "carries the lambs in his bosom," can alone lead them to that "table in the wilderness" which the Great Shepherd of the flock has prepared for them, and where, partaking of their common spiritual food, they may be knit together in one body.

We want then—

1. Additional Schools.
2. Additional Churches.
3. Additional Clergy.

We have indeed a right to look for aid in this work to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

Six Canonries of Westminster will be wholly suppressed, and one-sixth of the income of four others; and one-fifth of that of the Dean will be also handed over to the Commissioners. Now, a large portion of this income is derived from

the very houses in which our dense population is crowded; and yet all that has been done for this district has been the appropriation of two Canonries to the Rectors of St. Margaret and St. John respectively.

Four of the suppressed Canonries have already fallen in to the Commissioners, and have been appropriated by them to the general purposes of their fund. Surely the remaining two cannot be so properly applied as in the endowment of Clergy for that district whence the funds themselves are derived.

But, even with this aid, we shall fall far short of the necessities of our poorer brethren, and therefore far short of our own duty, if we, the Laity, do not contribute from our abundance to their penury.

The Westminster Spiritual Aid Fund* offers an opportunity, to all those who are disposed to evince the sincerity of their opposition to Rome, to do so in the most effectual manner, by providing instruction in the truths of our Reformed Church for those whom we may expect soon to be subjected to the plausible misrepresentations of the Romish priesthood. Let them not in this matter triumph over us; let them not say, "There, there, so would we have it."

I conclude in the words of the collect for the week,—

"Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people, that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

WILLIAM PAGE WOOD.

12, Great George Street,
November 29, 1850.

* Subscriptions to this Fund are received at Messrs. Drummonds, Charing Cross.

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DR. WISEMAN AND WESTMINSTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir, — May I crave the favour of your inserting the following statement of *facts*, with reference to the present spiritual condition of the city of Westminster, and the efforts of the real Church of England to improve it, as contrasted with the imaginative declamation of Dr. Wiseman, to whom the Pope has intrusted the charge of such members of the Romish communion as happen to reside amongst us?

I have resided for twenty-three years in the city of Westminster, and have no connexion, direct or indirect, beyond that of church communion, with the Dean and Chapter of the collegiate church or abbey; being, in fact, one of the 750 individuals (whom the Doctor designates "as some *hundred* members of the bar,") who have thought it their duty to protest against the resuscitation of antiquated Papal pretensions. It is not, however, my intention on the present occasion to deal with any other portion of Dr. Wiseman's manifesto, than the inuendoes contained in its laboured peroration with reference to Westminster.

I will not ask whether that peroration breathe the spirit of "straightforwardness" and "charity" claimed as the peculiar characteristics of the "Appeal;" but I will endeavour to extract from its somewhat verbose phraseology the propositions which it appears intended to insinuate rather than to state. I take them to be these:—

1. That "Westminster proper" consists of two very different districts,—one of which, Dr. Wiseman says, "comprises the stately abbey, with its adjacent palaces and its royal parks:" that to this

portion the duties and occupation of the Dean and Chapter are *mainly confined;* and there, he adds, they shall remain undisturbed.

2. That "close under the abbey of Westminster there lie concealed labyrinths of lanes, and courts, and alleys, and slums—nests of ignorance, vice, depravity, and crime, as well as of squalor, wretchedness, and disease,—whose atmosphere is typhus, whose ventilation is cholera; in which swarms a huge and almost countless population, in great measure, nominally at least, Catholics,"* which he shall be glad to visit "as a blessed pasture."

3. "That the existence, in ancient times, of an abbey on any spot, with a large staff of clergy and ample revenues, would have sufficed to create around it a little paradise of comfort, cheerfulness, and ease:" but that now "the wealth of the abbey is stagnant, and not diffusive; and that the holders of it ought not to be jealous of his making the *population* his care, without interfering with that wealth."

Now, as to the first proposition, no one will deny the fact of their being two districts in Westminster — one rich and the other poor,—not an uncommon case in large cities. But I never before heard that the Dean and Chapter paid any special attention to the "palaces and parks," to which it is said their occupation is mainly confined.

The second and third propositions, however, are those with which I have to deal seriously; and these are the facts:—

"Westminster proper" consists of the two parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, which, for the purposes of poor rate, &c., are united, but, spiritually, are under the charge of separate pastors. By a recent Act of Parliament, the rectories of St. Margaret and St. John are respectively attached to canonries of Westminster; but a portion of each canonry was, by the same Act, allotted to incumbents of district churches to be formed within the parishes.

* By this word Dr. Wiseman means *Roman* Catholics. Another ludicrous instance of this assumption occurs in a passage where he says, "The doctrine of Catholics *all over the world* is, that there is only one true Catholic Church under one head—the Bishop of Rome, or Pope;" although there are no less than 70,000,000 of Greek Catholics, and 20,000,000 of Anglo-Catholics, who utterly reject the Bishop of Rome's supremacy.

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The Dean and Chapter have no spiritual charge of the parishes; but they have ever evinced, since I have known them, a most hearty desire to concur with the incumbents in providing for the spiritual instruction, no less than for the temporal wants of the poorer inhabitants; and these are the results :—

I. Churches.

Twenty years ago there were two parish churches, and one chapel, without cure of souls; and as regards the edifice, it was a mean brick building, in a ruinous condition.

There are *now*, besides the two mother churches — 1. A splendid church, which has been raised by contributions, in lieu of the old brick building, and is now the district church of Christchurch. 2. A new district church of St. Mary, built on ground given by the Dean and Chapter, with an adjoining rectory. 3. A new district church at Knightsbridge, built by contributions. 4. The splendid church of St. Stephen, in Rochester-row, with rectory and schools, built at the sole expense of Miss Burdett Coutts. 5. There is in progress the church of St. Matthew, in Peter-street, built by contributions. 6. In progress, also, a very handsome church near the Vauxhall-road, the whole undertaken by one of the *canons of the abbey* at his sole expense. 7. A temporary district church in Palmer's village, about to be replaced, ere long, by a permanent building.*

In all, we shall soon have nine churches, where we had but three ; and of these, five will be in the midst of the *very slums* to which Dr. Wiseman so graphically refers.

II. Clergy.

Twenty years ago we had but *six* clergymen ; we *now* have *twenty* hard-working zealous men, whose week-day labours are incessant in the same *slums*, — excepting, of course, the Knightsbridge incumbent, whose district is an isolated one.

III. Church Schools.

Of these we have —

1. The Central National, in the Broad Sanctuary.

* Subscriptions for this church are received by the Rev. H. James, 4, Palace-street, Pimlico.

2. Central Infant, in Tufton-street, with a girls' school above it.
3. The Free School, in Dacre-street, for St. Margaret's.
4. The Free School, in the Horseferry-road, for St. John's.
5. The Christchurch District School, in Chapel-street.
6. The St. Mary's School, near Vincent-square.
7. The St. Stephen's School, in Rochester-row.
8. The Palmer's Village School.
9. The Knightsbridge School.*

I use the word school in the singular; though all of these have a boys' school and girls' school, and some an infant school besides.

I believe I understate the fact, when I say there are 2,500 of the *poorest* children in these schools. But we have besides *four endowed schools* for the poor, all founded since the Reformation of our Church, containing more than 500 children: we have also a large workhouse school.

IV. What have the Dean and Chapter Done?

The Dean and Chapter have, for ten years, contributed at the rate of nearly £8,000 a-year to the various spiritual works above stated. And it will be remembered that several of the canonries have, during that time, been suppressed, and their revenues — as we think unjustly — have been diverted to other desolate districts of England. I have already stated that one canon is now building a church, at his sole expense, near Vauxhall-bridge-road. It will cost about £6,000.†

V. The Spiritual Aid Fund.

This is a fund *originated* by one of the present Canons, with a donation of £1,000, augmented, by *his* personal applications to the wealthy, to £12,000, and now reaching £20,000. The Dean and Chapter gave £1,000 as a corporation, and many of the Canons contributed largely to it. Four curates and the rent of a school are paid out of its income. Grants to the amount of many hundred

* I inadvertently omitted a tenth school, that in Old Pye-street, placed in the very centre of the most degraded portion of our population; and in which, from its opening, about ten years ago, the service of our Church has been celebrated twice on the Lord's day.

† This should have been £10,000. The church is built on a valuable site given by Mr. Thomas Cubitt.

pounds have also been made out of it to schools, and other applications of it are in contemplation.

Lastly. What have the Romanists Done?

It is true there are many Roman Catholics among us, nearly all Irish, who form the most wretched portion of the poorer inhabitants,—I mean of such as are honest. Well, Dr. Wiseman's Church has provided them with one small school for boys, and one other for girls. Fifty of each, I believe, would be the largest number ever found there. The other Dissenters have, together with some Churchmen, established three Ragged Schools; and the Independents have one Free School, of much larger dimensions than that of the Romanists. But, Sir, the matter does not rest here. The miserable condition of the Irish, in temporal as well as spiritual matters, has occasioned our clergy *twice* to call the attention of some wealthy Romanists to the fact; but they remain as squalid and miserable as ever, in spite of the contributions cheerfully made to their relief by those who differ from them in creed, but regard them as their brethren.

I will conclude my too long intrusion on your columns by adverting to the statement, that "in ancient times the existence of the abbey would have created around it a little paradise of comfort, cheerfulness, and ease." Why, Sir, to the existence of a superstitious observance of our ancestors (yet manifest in the name of "The Broad Sanctuary") we mainly owe the degraded state of the worst part of our population. Thieves and prostitutes usually frequent the outskirts of all large cities, but the Sanctuary largely increased their numbers. I have an old map in which "Thieving-lane" figures, where there is now an open airy space, before our hospital. Since the *Reformation*, the Dean and Chapter have at a great pecuniary sacrifice cleared many of the unsightly lanes and streets, from which, *before the Reformation*, their predecessors derived large profits.

But do not imagine that they or I conceive we have done all that we ought to do. I for one shall not be satisfied till we have twice as many children at school, and have cleared away far more material and moral rubbish from the "lanes and alleys." Dr. Wiseman will, I hope, look after his Irish co-religionists. Let

him "provoke us" as much as he can "to good works." I do not think a Papal bull will remove the cholera and typhus of which he speaks, but rather in that respect trust to the closing of our graveyards and the opening of our new streets; neither do I think that inflated addresses and bitter sarcasm will do much to remove the excitement and violence of which he complains, or to purify the moral atmosphere in which we of Westminster reside; but if he will keep within his proper sphere, as an ecclesiastic of a foreign communion, I believe he will meet with nothing but courtesy, and, if he really ameliorate the condition of our poor Irish neighbours, with respect. I have no objection to give him any information he may require as to their condition (for he really at present knows nothing of Westminster), and for that purpose I inclose my name and address.

Yours most respectfully,

A WESTMINSTER LAYMAN.

P.S.—Dr. Wiseman speaks of his prayers at the shrine of "St. Edward," and of his "paying his entrance fee." He is probably aware that our Church offers her prayers to God three times every day in the same building, when, if he prefer offering his to "St. Edward," he can do so without paying any fee. I would gladly see these payments abolished, notwithstanding the necessity of caution in watching over the building when large parties choose to visit it. Not long since some Romish enthusiasts came in a body on "St. Edward's" Day, and wished to proceed from his tomb to pray at that of Queen Mary! but were deterred by finding that she and Elizabeth repose in the same vault.

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